UNITED NATIONS

A

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16 April 1990

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COMMITTEE ON INFORMATION
Twelfth session
5 to 20 April 1990

DRAFT REPORT

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(a) Promotion of the establishment of a new, more just and more effective world information and communication order intended to strengthen peace and international understanding and based on the free circulation and wider and better balanced dissemination of information

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(b) Continuation of the examination of United Nations public information policies and activities in the light of the evolution of international relations, particularly during the past two decades, and of the imperatives of the establishment of the new international economic order and of a new world information and communication order

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INTRODUCTION

1. At its thirty-fourth session, the General Assembly decided to maintain the Committee to Review United Nations Public Information Policies and Activities, established under Assembly resolution 33/115 C of 18 December 1978, which would be known as the Committee on Information, and to increase its membership from 41 to 66. In its resolution 34/182 of 18 December 1979, the Assembly requested the Committee on Information:

> "(a) To continue to examine United Nations public information policies and activities, in the light of the evolution of international relations, particularly during the past two decades, and of the imperatives of the establishment of the new international economic order and of a new world information and communication order;
>
> "(b) To evaluate and follow up the efforts made and the progress achieved by the United Nations system in the field of information and communications;
>
> "(c) To promote the establishment of a new, more just and more effective world information and communication order intended to strengthen peace and international understanding and based on the free circulation and wider and better balanced dissemination of information and to make recommendations thereon to the General Assembly;"

and requested the Committee on Information and the Secretary-General to report to the Assembly at its thirty-fifth session.

2. At its thirty-fifth session, the General Assembly expressed its satisfaction with the work of the Committee on Information, approved the report of the Committee and the recommendations of its Ad Hoc Working Group, 1/ reaffirmed the mandate given to the Committee in Assembly resolution 34/182, decided to increase the membership of the Committee from 66 to 67 (resolution 35/201 of 16 December 1980). The Committee on Information agreed, at its organizational session in 1980, that the principle of geographical rotation would be applied to all the officers of the Committee and that they should be elected for two-year terms of office.

3. At its thirty-sixth to forty-third sessions, the General Assembly again expressed its satisfaction with the work of the Committee on Information, approved the reports of the Committee 2/ and its recommendations, and reaffirmed the mandate given to the Committee in resolution 34/182 (General Assembly resolutions 36/149 B, 37/94 B, 38/82 B, 39/98, 40/164 A, 41/68 A, 42/162 and 43/60 A). At its forty-fourth session, the General Assembly took note of the report of the Committee on Information, reaffirmed the mandate given to the Committee in Assembly resolution 34/182 and requested the Committee to report to the Assembly at its forty-fifth session (resolution 44/50 of 8 December 1989).

4. At its thirty-ninth session, the General Assembly appointed two new members of the Committee, namely China and Mexico; at its forty-first session the Assembly appointed Malta as a new member of the Committee; at its forty-third session, the

Assembly appointed Hungary, Ireland and Zimbabwe as new members of the Committee, and at its forty-fourth session, the Assembly appointed Nepal as a new member of the Committee, bringing the total membership to 74.

5. The Committee is composed of the following Member States:

Algeria
Argentina
Bangladesh
Belgium
Benin
Brazil
Bulgaria
Burundi
Chile
China
Colombia
Congo
Costa Rica
Côte d'Ivoire
Cuba
Cyprus
Denmark
Ecuador
Egypt
El Salvador
Ethiopia
Finland
France
German Democratic Republic
Germany, Federal Republic of
Ghana
Greece
Guatemala
Guinea
Guyana
Hungary
India
Indonesia
Ireland
Italy
Japan
Jordan
Kenya
Lebanon
Malta
Mexico
Mongolia
Morocco
Nepal
Netherlands
Niger
Nigeria
Pakistan
Peru
Philippines
Poland
Portugal
Romania
Singapore
Somalia
Spain
Sri Lanka
Sudan
Syrian Arab Republic
Togo
Trinidad and Tobago
Tunisia
Turkey
Ukrainian Soviet Socialist Republic
Union of Soviet Socialist Republics
United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland
United Republic of Tanzania
United States of America
Venezuela
Viet Nam
Yemen
Yugoslavia
Zaire
Zimbabwe

I. ORGANIZATIONAL QUESTIONS

A. Opening of the session

6. The twelfth session of the Committee was convened at United Nations Headquarters on 5 April 1990. The Chairman and the Under-Secretary-General for Public Information made introductory statements (see annexes I and II).

B. Welcoming of new member

7. The Committee welcomed the representative of Nepal as a new member.

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C. Election of officers

8. Upon nomination by the representative of the German Democratic Republic, the Committee elected by acclamation Mr. Alexandre N. Boutsko (Ukrainian Soviet Socialist Republic), as Vice-Chairman of the Committee for the unexpired period, i.e. until the end of 1990, of the term of office of Mr. Gerhard Haensel (German Democratic Republic), who had resigned.

D. Organization of work of the Committee

9. The Committee adopted, without objection, the following agenda and programme of work:

1. Opening of the session.

2. Welcoming of new member.

3. Adoption of the agenda.

4. Election of officers.

5. Substantive questions:

   (a) Promotion of the establishment of a new, more just and more effective world information and communication order intended to strengthen peace and international understanding and based on the free circulation and wider and better balanced dissemination of information;

   (b) Continuation of the examination of United Nations public information policies and activities in the light of the evolution of international relations, particularly during the past two decades, and of the imperatives of the establishment of the new international economic order and of a new world information and communication order;

   (c) Evaluation and follow-up of the efforts made and the progress achieved by the United Nations system in the field of information and communications.

6. Other business.

10. The twelfth session of the Committee on Information took place at United Nations Headquarters from 5 to 20 April 1990.

11. For the consideration of item 5 of the agenda, the Committee had before it the following documents:

(a) Report of the Secretary-General on the activities of the Department of Public Information (A/AC.198/1990/2), submitted pursuant to the request made by the General Assembly in its resolution 44/50, section II, paragraph 4;

(b) Report of the Secretary-General on the public information activities of the United Nations against the policies and practices of apartheid (A/AC.198/1990/3), submitted pursuant to the request made by the General Assembly in its resolution 44/50, section II, paragraph 1, recommendation (2) (e);

(c) Report of the Secretary-General on the public information activities of the United Nations pertaining to the situation in the Middle East and the question of Palestine (A/AC.198/1990/4), submitted pursuant to the request made by the General Assembly in its resolution 44/50, section II, paragraph 1, recommendation (2) (g);

(d) Proposed medium-term plan for the period 1992-1997. Major programme VIII - Public information, Programme 38 - Public information. This document was submitted for review by the Committee, in accordance with the provisions of the Regulations and Rules Governing Programme Planning, the Programme Aspects of the Budget, the Monitoring of Implementation and the Methods of Evaluation;

(e) Report of the Secretary-General on the assessment of needs for technical assistance to radio stations that are broadcasting or willing to broadcast to South Africa (A/44/698) and report of the Secretary-General on a study of existing and potential interest in broadcasting United Nations anti-apartheid radio programmes and the extent to which audiences in selected urban centres in South Africa listen to them (A/45/162). These two reports were submitted pursuant to the requests addressed by the General Assembly in its resolution 43/50 H of 5 December 1988, paragraph 1 (b) and (c).

12. The following Member States took part in the session as observers:

13. Representatives of the following specialized agencies were present:

14. In addition, representatives of the League of Arab States and of the following non-governmental organizations were present:

E. Other business

15. The Chairman informed the Committee that Czechoslovakia, the Islamic Republic of Iran and Jamaica had requested membership in the Committee. The Committee, supporting that request, decided to submit the candidacy of Czechoslovakia, the Islamic Republic of Iran and Jamaica to the General Assembly for approval.

Notes

1/ Official Records of the General Assembly, Thirty-fifth Session, Supplement No. 21 (A/35/21).

2/ Ibid., Thirty-sixth Session, Supplement No. 21 (A/36/21); ibid., Thirty-seventh Session, Supplement No. 21 (A/37/21 and Corr.1); ibid., Thirty-eighth Session, Supplement No. 21 (A/38/21 and Corr.1 and 2); ibid., Thirty-ninth Session, Supplement No. 21 (A/39/21); ibid., Fortieth Session, Supplement No. 21 (A/40/21); ibid., Forty-first Session, Supplement No. 21 (A/41/21); ibid., Forty-second Session, Supplement No. 21 (A/42/21).

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Twelfth session
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DRAFT REPORT

Corrigendum

1. Insert new paragraph 15, reading as follows:

15. The Committee on Information decided to establish a Working Group and to conduct further informal consultations through the spokesmen for the regional groups and China.

2. Renumber existing paragraph 15 as new paragraph 16.

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Twelfth session
5 to 20 April 1990

DRAFT REPORT

Addendum

III. SUBSTANTIVE QUESTIONS

16. Statements during the general debate were made by or on behalf of the following States members of the Committee: Algeria, Argentina, Bangladesh, Brazil, Bulgaria, Chile, China, Cuba, Ecuador, Egypt, Ethiopia, Finland (on behalf of the Nordic countries), the German Democratic Republic, India, Indonesia, Ireland (on behalf of the States members of the European Economic Community), Japan, Kenya, Nepal, Nigeria, Pakistan, Philippines, Poland, Romania, Syrian Arab Republic, Tunisia, Ukrainian Soviet Socialist Republic, Union of Soviet Socialist Republics, United Kingdom (on behalf of the Group of Western European and Other States), United Republic of Tanzania, Venezuela, Viet Nam, Yugoslavia and Zimbabwe. A statement was also made by the observer for Czechoslovakia.

(a) Promotion of the establishment of a new, more just and more effective world information and communication order intended to strengthen peace and international understanding and based on the free circulation and wider and better balanced dissemination of information

17. In addressing the issue of a new world information and communication order, a large number of delegations welcomed the positive changes of the past year in the world which had significantly altered the international situation, creating favourable conditions for greater dialogue and understanding, as well as for enhanced international co-operation. Many representatives noted the important link between a free flow of information and the historic developments which had taken place at the national and international levels. The hope was expressed that the favourable political climate would help to improve the situation pertaining to

information and communication, while at the same time information and communication would play an increasing role in shaping international relations and co-operation in an interdependent world.

18. In the view of most delegations, the spirit of the time was best reflected by the consensual adoption by the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), at its twenty-fifth General Conference held last November in Paris, of a new strategy for "Communication in the service of humanity" based on freedom of information and on international co-operation. Many delegations expressed support for the strategy, which underscored the need to encourage the free flow of information at the international as well as national level, promote the wider and more balanced dissemination of information without any obstacle to the freedom of expression, and develop all the appropriate means of strengthening communication capacities in the developing countries in order to increase their participation in the communication process. The view was expressed that the achievements of the General Conference represented a balanced effort to address the call for a new world information and communication order and the concern for freedom of information.

19. Many representatives expressed the hope that the improved international atmosphere, of which both the breakthrough achieved by UNESCO at its twenth-fifth General Conference and the progress made by the General Assembly at its forty-fourth session were a reflection, would inspire the Committee in its efforts at reaching agreement over still outstanding issues on a common approach.

20. A large number of delegations affirmed their commitment to the fundamental principles of freedom of information. It was emphasized that freedom of information was a basic human right and the touchstone of all freedoms and human rights, and that the right to hold and express one's opinion was fundamental to the development of a just and democratic society. The fact that freedom of information required the willingness and capacity to employ its privileges without abuse, to seek the facts without prejudice and to spread knowledge without malicious intent, as called for by the General Assembly in its resolution 59 (I) of 14 December 1946, was also underlined by some delegations. The view was also expressed by some delegations that in ensuring free dissemination of and access to information, the sovereignty of States and their social values and cultural traditions had to be respected.

21. One representative, speaking on behalf of several others, regretted that despite the recent positive developments, freedom of information was too often violated. Condemning violations of freedom of the press wherever they occurred, he paid a tribute to the 71 journalists who died last year in the exercise of their profession.

22. One representative referring to television broadcasts from another country said that those broadcasts violated both his country's sovereignty and decisions by the Frequency Board of the International Telecommunication Union (ITU). Experts from his country were therefore blocking the transmission of those broadcasts. That representative emphasized that a really free flow of information would require an agreed upon exchange of information in both directions. Another representative,

emphasizing the integrity of those broadcasts, stated that their sole purpose was to provide information not otherwise available and that they did not interfere with the national television. An advisory opinion from ITU had been received by his Government and was under study.

23. The view was expressed that freedom of information was also of critical importance to the development and welfare of society, and to the promotion of understanding between peoples and different cultures. In today's highly interdependent world, economic development and social progress could be achieved only if there was a free flow of information, with adequate channels of communication on both the national and international levels.

24. A number of delegations reiterated their concern that, although developments in mass communication had transformed the world into a "global village", disparities remained, and were aggravated even further, in the distribution of means of communication and in the information flow between the developed and developing countries. The communications technology of the developed world had widened the information gap. The quest for some balance in this regard continued therefore to be a major challenge.

25. It was in that context that delegations concerned reiterated their call for a new world information and communication order. The view was expressed that a new information order carried the best hope for reducing the disparities existing between the information systems of the developing and developed world and ensuring a two-way flow of information. It was emphasized that support for a new information order was based not on any opposition to the principle of free flow of information and ideas, or on an avowed ambition to undermine freedom of the press, but on the fact that the current situation was incompatible with that fundamental principle. The view was also expressed that guaranteed access to information and communication technologies for all nations, and assistance on the part of developed countries, were key elements of the comprehensive democratic restructuring of international information relations.

26. It was thus understood on the part of many delegations that the implication of the call for the free flow of information and its wider and better balanced dissemination without any obstacle to the freedom of expression was essentially a call for further improving the practical possibilities of developing countries to participate more fully in the exchange of information. It did not imply a balance concerning the content of information, nor the restriction of anyone's possibilities to exchange and disseminate information. It was also understood that freedom of expression and the fullest possible facilities of access to information were guaranteed.

27. One delegation, speaking on behalf of several others, acknowledged the disparities existing between developed and developing countries that affected the capability of the public, private and other media and individuals in developing countries, to disseminate information and communicate their views. There was also recognition on the part of those delegations of the need to strengthen communications capacities and to improve the media infrastructure and communications technology in the developing countries, especially in the areas of

training of journalists and other communication professionals, and dissemination of information, so as to assure to the populations of those countries the full benefits of freedom of information.

28. Several delegations drew attention to the activity of the News Agencies Pool of Non-Aligned Countries, as part of the efforts by those countries to overcome the information gap between the developed and the developing world. However, in view of scarce resources, the participation of some non-aligned countries in that Pool was limited, and assistance to those countries was required from the United Nations and all those countries capable and willing to render such assistance. In the view of a number of delegations, developed countries should commit themselves on concessional terms to assist developing countries in building up their communication infrastructure.

29. In that connection, a large number of delegations expressed the view that UNESCO's International Programme for the Development of Communication (IPDC), as an important element in the implementation of its new strategy for communication, was an essential instrument for the development of global communication and information in general, and the development of infrastructure and strengthening of the capacities of communication in the developing countries in particular. As such, IPDC could play an important role in the field of co-operation between developed and developing countries. Emphasis was placed on the need to strengthen the Special Account of IPDC in cash or kind and to ensure a closer co-operation between IPDC and the United Nations Development Programme.

30. Many delegations, while expressing regret that the Committee had not been able to reach a consensus in past years, noted with satisfaction that differences had been narrowed through intensive consultations between the Chairman and spokesmen for the regional groups and China. An appeal was made for members of the Committee to demonstrate the necessary political will to reach an agreement, and the hope was expressed that the Committee at its current session would make a significant contribution to overcoming the differences that had prevailed for so long in its work. Once that consensus was achieved, the Committee should be able to devote its task to analysing more fully the work of the Department of Public Information and providing the Department with a practical and flexible mandate, in particular for the benefit of developing countries.

(b) Continuation of the examination of United Nations public information policies and activities in the light of the evolution of international relations, particularly during the past two decades, and of the imperatives of the establishment of the new international economic order and of a new world information and communication order

(c) Evaluation and follow-up of the efforts made and the progress achieved by the United Nations system in the field of information and communications

31. The members of the Committee generally welcomed the report of the Secretary-General (A/AC.198/1990/2) and the detailed oral report by the Under-Secretary-General for Public Information on the activities of the Department of Public Information. A large number of delegations supported the new approaches adopted by the Department under the leadership of the Under-Secretary-General and noted that through structural reform and technological innovation, the Department had substantially improved the quality and delivery of its multi-faceted information products and scored commendable successes in bringing the United Nations to the people of the world in a more expeditious and more comprehensive fashion.

32. The Department was urged by several representatives to pay still closer attention to the concerns of the developing countries in its future operations and to continue to cover adequately and publicize the adjustment efforts of those countries.

33. The majority of delegations commended the Department especially for its multi-media information programme on the independence process in Namibia and the operation of the United Nations Transition Assistance Group (UNTAG). One delegation suggested that the Department use its experience in Namibia to promote understanding of the role of the Organization in the Middle East and other parts of the world. Another delegation urged the Department to make available to television stations that so request the complete film on the transition of Namibia to independence. Yet another delegation noted that the coverage of Namibia's independence celebrations could have been more elaborate, and expressed the hope that the upcoming admission of Namibia to the United Nations would find a more comprehensive coverage.

34. One delegation was particularly appreciative of the publicity given by the Department to the United Nations Observer Group in Central America (ONUCA) and to the Central American peace process.

35. Several members of the Committee expressed satisfaction with the public opinion polls commissioned by the Department about awareness of the United Nations and its activities in various countries and, supporting the extension of such polls to other countries in various geographical areas, expressed the hope that the results would be of further help to the communication strategies of the Department. One representative was pleased that the results of the public opinion poll conducted in his country allowed the Government to draw all the necessary

conclusions on steps to be taken towards refining the methods of disseminating information on the United Nations to the national audience, and looked forward to close collaboration with the Department in that regard.

36. A large number of delegations paid a tribute to the Department and its efforts to fulfil its mandates. In particular, the work of its Executive Media Service was commended by a number of representatives for the quality and timeliness of its information services both to the press and to the delegations of Member States. In contrast, one delegation voiced its concern that the restructuring and performance of the Department had fallen short of expectations. In that connection, that delegation called for more activities in sensitizing international public opinion on the major unsolved issues of peace, security and development and cited the backlog in certain publications.

37. The Department was urged to continue to focus attention on areas of special concern to Member States. They included the eradication of apartheid, the elimination of all forms of racial discrimination, the right of peoples to self-determination and decolonization, the situation in the Middle East, the question of Palestine and the Palestinian intifadah, international peace and security, disarmament, the promotion of human rights, the status of women, drug abuse, the environment and development, African economic recovery, the problems of economic and social development, including those of the least developed countries, and the promotion of international economic co-operation aimed at resolving foreign debt problems.

38. Commenting on the new approaches adopted by the Department for the effective implementation of its programmes on specific topics, various delegations praised the Department for its efforts in promoting special sessions and other events, such as the sixteenth special session of the General Assembly on apartheid and its destructive consequences in southern Africa; the special session of the General Assembly devoted to international economic co-operation, in particular to the revitalization of economic growth and development of the developing countries; the special session of the General Assembly to consider the question of international co-operation against illicit production, supply, demand, trafficking and distribution of narcotic drugs; and the 1992 United Nations Conference on Environment and Development.

39. One delegation drew attention to the fact that the 1992 United Nations Conference on Environment and Development was probably the most important United Nations event of the decade, thus deserving a comprehensive information programme and full coverage by the Department from its earliest stages on. Another delegation asked the Department to launch an information campaign in view of the forthcoming Second United Nations Conference on the Least Developed Countries. Yet another delegation urged the Department to give the widest publicity to the thirtieth anniversary of the Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples. The Department was also requested by one delegation to make a concerted effort in promoting various international conventions adopted by the General Assembly, in particular the recent International Convention against the Recruitment, Financing and Training of Mercenaries.

40. With reference to the report of the Secretary-General on public information activities of the United Nations pertaining to the situation in the Middle East and the question of Palestine (A/AC.198/1990/4), several delegations welcomed and requested the Departmant to continue its important role in promoting the objectives of the United Nations in that area.

41. With regard to the public information activities of the United Nations against the policies and practices of apartheid, as reflected in document A/AC.198/1990/3, delegations addressing the question requested the Department to continue to give special attention to that priority issue. The view was expressed that one of the most effective ways of achieving the goal of reaching all South Africans was to give the necessary technical and financial assistance to those States willing to broadcast to South Africa.

42. Commenting on the assessment of needs for technical assistance to radio stations broadcasting or willing to broadcast to South Africa, as reflected in document A/44/698, pursuant to General Assembly resolution 43/50 H of 5 December 1988, two delegations requested that the Secretariat provide a clearer indication of the planned funding of the technical assistance programmes which would enable individual radio stations in four African countries to be heard inside South Africa. Given the repressive political conditions in South Africa, one delegation had some doubts about the results of the listenership survey of United Nations anti-apartheid radio programmes in South Africa, as reflected in document A/45/162. That delegation observed that the survey had serious technical limitations because of the difficulties faced by radio broadcasts in reaching South Africa. A further survey was needed when the technical capacity for the broadcasts to reach South Africa had been enhanced. That delegation also stressed the need for a concerted effort to beam the anti-apartheid programmes to the rest of the international community where South Africa was making propaganda inroads, particularly to countries with trade ties with the apartheid régime.

43. A number of delegations spoke of the importance of the radio programme of the Department in their regions of the world. In that context, one representative expressed the hope that the future of Portuguese language broadcasting was ensured. While noting with satisfaction the continuation of the taped radio programme in Bahasa Indonesian language, one delegation called on the Department to bring about an improvement of the programme, including the re-establishment of a post. Another delegation asked for the inclusion of the Nepali language in the Asian Regional Programme Unit. One representative also called for the strengthening of the Middle East radio unit. The trend towards collaboration between the Department and radio stations of developing countries was encouraged.

44. With regard to the publications and other printed materials produced by the Department, one delegation emphasized that they represented vital educational materials in a period when there was no foreign exchange to buy books, and suggested that they be made available to institutions of higher learning in developing countries. That delegation commended the Department for its publication Africa Recovery, which was considered one of the most authentic and up-to-date periodicals on the economic and social crisis facing Africa. Although satisfied with the preparation and dissemination of Africa Recovery magazine, another

delegation believed that more should be done in highlighting the environmental plight of Africa as well.

45. One delegation requested that publications by the Department on major themes be printed in all official languages. Another delegation was particularly interested in the translation of United Nations documents into the vernacular, not only to reduce costs but to facilitate information access to a wide variety of population groups in countries faced with problems arising from the multiplicity of languages.

46. Many members of the Committee underlined the important role of United Nations information centres, as essential tools for disseminating information on the United Nations and promoting awareness of and support for the world organization. It was pointed out that centres were an important communication link between the Department and Member States, and sometimes the only permanent link between the United Nations, local media, educational and cultural institutions and non-governmental organizations. Several delegations expressed support for the modernization and enhancement of the technical capabilities of the centres.

47. One delegation noted that a new task which the centres were facing was the collection in the respective host countries of publicly available information on questions relating to peace and security, as it was proposed by a group of States in the Special Committee on the Charter of the United Nations and on the Strengthening of the Role of the Organization. Another delegation wished to know what machinery and procedures existed to co-ordinate information activities in countries having no information centres.

48. A number of delegations called for a further strengthening and upgrading of United Nations information centres in order to cope better with new challenges in the information field. One representative called for a strengthening of centres in particular in the Arab world. Expressing the view that centres in Africa were inadequate, given the vastness of the continent, one delegation requested that those centres also be strengthened and upgraded. Also, the new Namibian nation should be assisted in the establishment of a United Nations information centre.

49. One representative expressed doubts that resident representatives of the United Nations Development Programme could combine their functions with those of running United Nations information centres. He regretted that the post of Centre Director at Dar es Salaam remained vacant, and urged that the post be filled promptly. Another representative expressed dissatisfaction that the Director's post at the Dhaka information centre had been vacant for more than three years.

50. A number of delegations welcomed the efforts made by the Department to strengthen its ties with the News Agencies Pool of Non-Aligned Countries, and urged the Department to pursue its co-operation also with the Eco-Pool of the News Agencies and the Broadcasting Organization of Non-Aligned Countries, as well as with other news agencies and intergovernmental and regional organizations. The co-operation of the Department with the Pool was cited as an important step towards supporting the information structures in developing countries and in helping to bring about a more balanced international flow of information.

51. The organization of round tables at Headquarters and the launching of outreach programmes for media specialists were highlighted among the major endeavours of the Department to expand and strengthen its ties with media representatives in various geographical regions.

52. One delegation suggested that journalists be dispatched from the United Nations to regions where its resolutions were being ignored or gravely violated.

53. Welcoming the provisions made by the Department to continue its training programme for broadcasters and journalists from developing countries, some delegations expressed the hope that more countries would benefit from that programme, which was considered helpful in enhancing young professionals' awareness of the work of the United Nations. A few delegations requested that that programme be intensified. It was also further suggested that the Department undertake an evaluation of its training programme.

54. One delegation, strongly supporting the activities of the United Nations Correspondents Association (UNCA), urged the Department to extend all facilities to UNCA members in the discharge of their professional duties.

55. Some delegations called on the Department to take into account the principle of equitable geographical distribution of posts, especially at senior levels and in the technical units of the Department, while other delegations emphasized that that principle should apply only to the Secretariat as a whole. One representative requested information on steps taken by the Secretariat to increase commensurately personnel with regional expertise in the anti-apartheid radio unit of the Department, in response to resolution 43/50 H, paragraph 1 (d), and asked for detailed information on the regional distribution of posts in that unit.

56. Another representative, although satisfied with the activities of the Department, was concerned about the fact that the number of posts in the Photo Unit had been reduced, thereby affecting its efficiency. He called for an improvement of that service and continued attention to the important information medium of news photographs.

57. Commenting on the work of the Committee itself, some delegations pointed to the need for the Committee to provide the Department with a flexible mandate, which would enable the Department to react to a rapidly changing world and to new demands made on it by Member States. One delegation, speaking on behalf of several others, expressed the view that the Committee had often failed to reach agreement on an appropriate mandate for the Department, not because of irreconcilable differences but because the Committee had been distracted by considerations of matters not related to the Department's work.

58. Another delegation noted that demands were often placed on the Department without always bearing in mind its real capabilities, and urged that the necessary resources be secured for the Department to meet such demands. Several delegations expressed agreement with the text of the proposed medium-term plan for the period 1992-1997, as contained in document A/45/6. One representative wished to see, in the course of implementing that plan, enhanced co-ordination with all substantive

departments of the Secretariat. In that context, attention should be given to strengthening co-operation and co-ordination through the Joint United Nations Information Committee (JUNIC). Another representative expressed the hope that resources would be made available to enable the Department to implement the medium-term plan.

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Addendum

IV. ADOPTION OF THE REPORT OF THE COMMITTEE TO THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY AT ITS FORTY-FIFTH SESSION

As indicated in paragraph 15, the Committee on Information established a Working Group and conducted further informal consultations through the spokesmen of regional groups and China.

At its ninth meeting, on 2 May 1990, the Committee decided, by consensus, to recommend to the General Assembly the adoption of the following draft resolutions:

Draft resolution A

Information in service of mankind

The General Assembly,

Urges the full implementation of the following recommendations:

All countries, the United Nations system as a whole and all others concerned,

Reaffirming their commitment to the principles of the Charter of the United Nations and to the principles of freedom of the press and freedom of information, as well as to those of the independence, pluralism and diversity of the media,

Deeply concerned by the disparities existing between developed and developing countries and the consequences of every kind arising from these

disparities that affect the capability of the public, private or other media and individuals in developing countries to disseminate information and communicate their views and their cultural and ethical values through endogenous cultural production, as well as ensuring the diversity of sources of and their free access to information,

Recognizing the call in this context for what in the United Nations and at various international forums has been termed "a new world information and communication order, seen as an evolving and continuous process", should:

1. Co-operate and interact with a view to reducing existing disparities in information flows at all levels by increasing assistance for the development of communication infrastructures and capabilities in developing countries, with due regard for their needs and the priorities attached to such areas by those countries, and in order to enable them and the public, private or other media in developing countries to develop their own information and communication policies freely and independently and increase the participation of media and individuals in the communication process, and ensure a free flow of information at all levels;

2. Assure to journalists the free and effective performance of their professional tasks and condemn resolutely all attacks against them;

3. Provide support for the continuation and strengthening of practical training programmes for broadcasters and journalists from public, private and other media in developing countries;

4. Enhance regional efforts and co-operation among developing countries, as well as co-operation between developed and developing countries, to strengthen communication capacities and to improve the media infrastructure and communication technology in the developing countries, especially in the areas of training and dissemination of information;

5. Aim, in addition to bilateral co-operation, at providing all possible support and assistance to the developing countries and the media, public, private or other, in the developing countries, with due regard to their interests and needs in the field of information and to action already adopted within the United Nations system, including:

(a) The development of the human and technical resources that are indispensable for the improvement of information and communication systems in developing countries and support for the continuation and strengthening of practical training programmes, such as those already operating under both public and private auspices throughout the developing world;

(b) The creation of conditions that will enable developing countries and the media, public, private or other, in developing countries, to have, by using their national and regional resources, the communication technology suited to their national needs, as well as the necessary programme material, especially for radio and television broadcasting;

(c) Assistance in establishing and promoting telecommunication links at the subregional, regional and interregional levels, especially among developing countries;

6. Provide full support for the International Programme for the Development of Communication of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, which should support both public and private media.

Draft resolution B

United Nations public information policies and activities

The General Assembly

1. Calls upon the Secretary-General, in respect of United Nations public information policies and activities, to implement the following recommendations, in accordance with relevant United Nations resolutions:

(1) The United Nations system as a whole should co-operate in a concerted manner, through its information services and the co-ordination of the Joint United Nations Information Committee (JUNIC), in promoting a more comprehensive and realistic image of the activities and potential of the United Nations system in all its endeavours, in accordance with the principles and purposes of the Charter of the United Nations, with particular emphasis on the creation of a climate of confidence, the strengthening of multilateralism and the promotion of the development activities in the United Nations system;

(2) Reaffirming the primary role of the General Assembly in elaborating, co-ordinating and harmonizing United Nations policies and activities in the field of information, the Secretary-General is requested to ensure that the activities of the Department of Public Information, as the focal point of the public information tasks of the United Nations, are strengthened and improved, keeping in view the purposes and principles of the Charter, the priority areas defined by the Assembly and the recommendations of the Committee on Information, so as to ensure an objective and more coherent coverage of, as well as better knowledge about, the United Nations and its work. The Secretary-General should ensure that the Department of Public Information:

(a) Co-operate more regularly with the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, especially at the working level, with a view to maximizing the contribution of the Department to tne efforts of that organization;

(b) Enhance its co-operation with news agencies of and in the developing countries, in particular the News Agencies Pool of Non-Aligned Countries, the Eco-Pool of the News Agencies of Non-Aligned Countries and the Broadcasting Organization of Non-Aligned Countries, as well as with other news agencies and intergovernmental and regional organizations;

(c) Continue to disseminate, in co-ordination with the information services of other relevant agencies, information about United Nations activities pertaining, inter alia, to:

(i) International peace and security;

(ii) Disarmament;

(iii) Peace-keeping operations;

(iv) Decolonization and the situation in the Non-Self-Governing Territories;

(v) The elimination of foreign occupation;

(vi) Human rights;

(vii) The elimination of all forms of racial discrimination;

(viii) The advancement of the status of women and their role in society;

(ix) The problems of economic and social development, as well as international economic co-operation aimed at resolving external debt problems;

(x) The least developed countries;

(xi) The environment and development;

(xii) The campaign against terrorism in all its forms, bearing in mind General Assembly resolution 40/61 of 9 December 1985;

(xiii) The international fight against drug abuse and illicit trafficking;

(d) Do its utmost to disseminate widely and to publicize the United Nations Programme of Action for African Economic Recovery and Development 1986-1990 1/ and the tremendous efforts of the African countries towards recovery and development, as well as the positive response by the international community to alleviate the serious economic situation prevailing in Africa;

(e) Enhance the effectiveness of its activities and the dissemination of information on United Nations activities against the policies and practices of apartheid, giving due attention to the unilateral measures and official censorship imposed on the local and international media with regard to all aspects of that issue;

1/ Resolution S-13/2, annex.

(f) Continue to disseminate information about activities of the United Nations directed at a comprehensive, just and lasting solution of international conflicts by exclusively peaceful means, as highlighted in the Secretary-General's report on the work of the Organization;

(g) Continue to cover all United Nations activities pertaining to the situation in the Middle East and the question of Palestine in particular, and current developments in that region, and report thereon to the Committee on Information at its thirteenth session, in 1991;

(3) The Department of Public Information should continue its efforts in promoting an informed understanding of the work and purposes of the United Nations system among the peoples of the world and in strengthening the image of the United Nations system as a whole and, in this connection, it is recommended that the Secretary-General should ensure that the Department:

(a) Continue to maintain consistent editorial independence and accuracy in reporting all the material it produces, taking necessary measures to ensure that its output contains adequate, objective and equitable information about issues before the Organization, reflecting divergent opinions where they occur;

(b) In the context of the review of its role, performance and methods of work, continue to apply appropriate modern technologies for the collection, production, storage, dissemination and distribution of information materials, including the use of satellite facilities;

(c) Consider expanding the programme of telephone news bulletins that are paid for by its users;

(d) Continue its co-operation with those countries that have expressed readiness to assist the United Nations in resuming the short-wave broadcasts through their respective national networks free of charge and encourage expansion of such a type of co-operation with those developed and developing countries with recognized capabilities in this field;

(e) Take adequate measures to resume the taped radio programmes, which it has temporarily curtailed, if so requested by broadcasting stations;

(f) Continue its briefing, assistance and orientation programme for broadcasters and journalists from developing countries focused on United Nations-related issues;

(g) Provide on the basis of its activities, information to UNESCO about new forms of co-operation, at the regional and subregional levels, for the training of media professionals and for the improvement of the infrastructure of developing countries in the field of information and communication;

(h) Co-operate with educational institutions of Member States, educators and education policy makers, informing them about United Nations activities;

(i) Ensure adequate daily coverage of United Nations open meetings in the two working languages of the Secretariat, reflecting the views of all delegations with accuracy and objectivity. The Department should also continue to co-operate closely with and provide assistance to members of the United Nations Correspondents' Association, taking into account their needs and requirements, especially in the area of press releases, press conferences and briefings, which provide them with basic information for reporting;

(j) Use the official languages of the United Nations adequately in its documents and audio-visual documentation and make balanced use of the two working languages of the Secretariat;

(k) Ensure timely distribution of its material to subscribers and to United Nations information centres;

(4) The Department of Public Information should produce and distribute its publications in a timely manner. In particular, the Secretary-General is requested to make further efforts regarding the timely appearance of the United Nations Yearbook. The improvement in format and printing of the UN Chronicle is welcome. The Department is encouraged to continue to consider the interests of the specific target audiences as it formulates its editorial policies;

(5) The Secretary-General is requested to expedite his consultations regarding the provision of the appropriate technical and financial assistance to those States which are broadcasting or willing to broadcast to South Africa in order to enable their radio transmitters to be heard inside South Africa, as identified in section VII of his report (A/44/698), in fulfilment of the mandate of the General Assembly contained in paragraph 1 of the report (A/44/698), and to report to the thirteenth session of the Committee on Information;

(6) The Secretary-General is urged to continue his efforts to secure a sound and stable financial basis for the publications Development Forum and Africa Recovery;

(7) It is recognized that United Nations information centres constitute an important means of disseminating information about the United Nations among the people of the world. In this regard, United Nations information centres should intensify direct and systematic communication exchange with local media, information and educational institutions and non-governmental organizations. The Department should arrange for periodic evaluation of the centres' activities in this regard. It should continue to co-ordinate closely with other field offices of the United Nations system, particularly those of the United

Nations Development Programme, in order to avoid duplication of work, taking into account the functional autonomy that the United Nations information centres should have. The Department should provide open and unhindered access by all people to all United Nations information centres and to all materials distributed through the centres. It is also urged to pursue the process of linking the remaining United Nations information centres that have not been linked with electronic mail;

(8) Stressing the need for co-ordinating the information activities of the United Nations system and recognizing the important role that the Joint United Nations Information Committee plays in that regard, the Department of Public Information is encouraged to continue its active participation in the work of that Committee;

(9) It is recognized that free distribution of materials is necessary in the public information activities of the United Nations. However, as demands increase and whenever it is desirable and possible, the Department of Public Information should actively encourage the sale of its materials;

(10) In view of the importance of radio programmes in developing countries, the Secretary-General is requested to enhance the efficiency of and to ensure full programme delivery by all regional radio units, namely, the African, Asian, Caribbean, European, Latin American and Middle Eastern Units and the Anti-Apartheid Programmes Section, including production of radio programmes called for in General Assembly resolution 38/82 B of 15 December 1983;

(11) All reports by the Secretary-General, as well as by representatives of the Department of Public Information, to the Committee on Information and to the General Assembly, in particular on new programmes or on the expansion of existing programmes, should contain:

(a) Detailed information on the output of the Department on each topic included in its work programme, which forms the basis of its programme budget;

(b) The costs of the activities undertaken on each topic;

(c) Adequate information on target audiences, end-use of the Department's products and analysis of feedback data received by the Department;

(d) A statement detailing the priority level that the Secretary-General has attached to current or future activities of the Department in documents dealing with such activities;

(e) The Department's evaluation of the effectiveness of its different programmes and activities, with particular reference to the need constantly to review internal programme elements and activities;

2. Requests the Secretary-General to implement the recommendations relating to the activities of the Department of Public Information in accordance with the budgetary procedures as approved by the General Assembly in its resolutions 41/213 of 19 December 1986, 42/211 of 21 December 1987, 43/213 of 21 December 1988 and 44/200 B of 21 December 1989, and taking into account the priorities set by the Assembly;

3. Requests the Secretary-General to report to the Committee on Information at its thirteenth session in 1991 on the activities of the Department of Public Information and on the implementation of the recommendations in the present resolution;

4. Further requests the Secretary-General to report to the General Assembly at its forty-sixth session on the implementation of the present resolution;

5. Requests the Committee on Information to report to the General Assembly at its forty-sixth session;

6. Decides to include in the provisional agenda of its forty-sixth session the item entitled "Questions relating to information".